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ABSTRACT

This Bulletin gives an overview, through questions and answers, of team management from the standpoint of the superintendent, the principal, and industry. Team management is "ideal" to the extent that it operates democratically, and "practical" in that it normally finds a more sound solution than if one person, alone, came up with a solution. The management team concept as a practical venture is not without its challenges, as it requires a dedicated democratic boss (a humane manager) as well as more time and effort than the traditional way of managing. (Authors)

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OSSC BULLETIN

MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Ideal? Practical? Both?

by

Kenneth A. Erickson
and
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Oregon School Study Council
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Preface

The important subject of team management in educational administration was dealt with at OASA Professional Growth Seminars held in early 1973 in Medford, Eugene, and Portland. The seminars were planned by the Field Training and Service Bureau of the College of Education, University of Oregon. Materials in this Bulletin were excerpted from presentations given by the speakers, and from discussions of participants. Several topics related to the management team were covered, including 1) Principals View the Management Team, 2) The Management Team: An Industrialist's Point of View, 3) The Management Team in a Public School System, and 4) Humaneness--An Essential Ingredient of the Successful Team. (A section on Humaneness will be published later as a separate Bulletin.)

Presentations were given by:

Principals

Boyd Gibson, Griffin Creek Elementary, Medford
Tom Cowan, Roseburg High, Roseburg
John Root, Fir Grove Elementary, Roseburg
Don DuBois, Sprague High, Salem
Gary Salyers, Happy Valley Elementary, Portland
Ed West, Fremont Junior High, Parkrose

Industrialists

Paul Kenmoen, Director of Public Relations, Harry and David, Medford
Guyot Frazier, Director of Personnel, Tektronics, Inc., Beaverton
S. G. Fred DeChant, Personnel Director, Georgia Pacific Corp., Portland

School Superintendents

E. L. Holden, Superintendent, San Leandro, California
Jack Frisk, Superintendent, Yakima, Washington

This Bulletin gives an overview, through questions and answers, of team management from the standpoint of the superintendent, the principal, and industry. The editing and illustrations done by Julieanne Thompson are recognized with appreciation.

It is hoped that word usage, "team management" or "management team," does not leave the impression that the traditional hierarchy of authority is necessarily dissolved. Regardless of the organizational structure used in a school district--or for solving a problem, the idea of "team" is perhaps more important than the structure of "team" (which could have various forms). The idea of "team" implies shared and concerted effort in solving complex administrative problems. This "shared responsibility" is based on two main assumptions. First, it is based on the assumption that most decisions, especially difficult ones, turn out better if a) the people who will be affected by the decision are somehow included in the decision making; b) several alternatives are considered; c) possible decisions are challenged for their effectiveness and utility by other staff members. Secondly, the "shared responsibility" of a management team is based on the assumption that most employees need and want to feel an important part of the enterprise for which they work. With employee participation of a significant nature, there results higher employee morale, hence greater motivation to excel and thus better performance--all fostering success.

In the public school "enterprise," does the school administrator function with decisiveness and yet with flexibility? Does he realize when he must gather input from relevant sources in order to find a right solution and to keep up the morale of the employees? Does the

superintendent who is one of, e.g., a twenty-member management team really share the decision making? Does he really listen to and ask questions of his team members--to find the best solution?

Granted, there are school problems which must be quickly solved--e.g., there is a snowstorm and the superintendent must make a decision on closing the schools. However, many school problems are too complex both for such quick decision making and for only one person to make--no matter how competent he may be. No school administrator has all the solutions, nor can he function effectively without assistance. And no school administrator, merely because of his position, can claim to be superior to all other employees. It is the wise, the humane administrator who realizes this and acts accordingly. Thus the management team evolves . . .

Vic Cullens, President
Oregon Association of School Administrators

Management Team/Team Management: Questions and Answers

1. What is meant by the management team/team management concept generally?

"Management team" generally refers to the structure resulting when two or more people are engaged, together, in tasks of management. "Team management" generally means that activities of management are being carried out by two or more people together.

In some cases, a whole group may make the decisions. It is generally assumed that if a consensus of opinion is reached, the decision is better than if only the top man made the decision. A consensus is not always found through team management, but it is felt that trying to reach such a conclusion together still tests a possible solution for its worth.

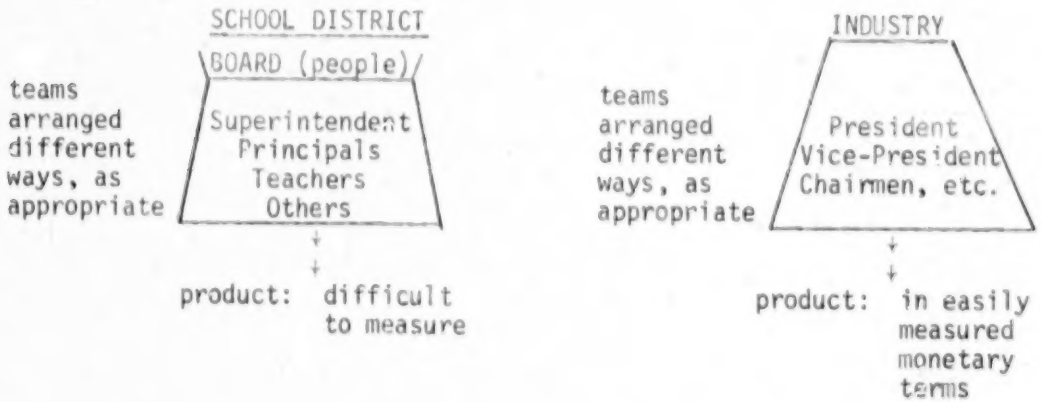
In other cases, various levels of an organization give input to the manager so he can make a final decision based on relevant information. For a specific and highly specialized problem, sometimes the appropriate specialized persons work on the problem--either as members of a "task force" or of the management team itself.

Some key terms implied by team management include:

A. shared responsibility
B. democratic boss/humane manager
C. group decision making/problem solving
D. participative decision making
E. humane climate of organization
F. process/behavioral skills
G. individual creativity
H. room for innovation
I. inclusion of appropriate problem solvers for problem at hand
J. integrative inputs
K. dignity of man/individual worth
L. collective, cooperative management
M. traditional hierarchy need not be adhered to

2. Does the concept differ at all when applied to the operation of a school district?

The general management team concept does not differ when applied to a school district. However, it should be noted that, because of the nature of a school district, as opposed, e.g., to an industrial organization, the management team's structure may be different from that of industry:



3. What are the distinguishing differences between the governance of a school district under a team management concept and under the traditional management concept?

Distinguishing characteristics between team management and traditional management in school districts:

TEAM	TRADITIONAL
A. democratic leadership	A. probable autocratic leadership
B. input from various sources, or several share decision making	B. one decision maker
C. worth of all individuals recognized in organization	C. worth of individuals only according to hierarchy, and goals of district
D. "matrix system" of organization	D. hierarchy system of organization

TEAM	TRADITIONAL
E. better, forthright communications	E. game playing in communication
F. round-the-table negotiations	F. across-the-table negotiations
G. theory Y: workers considered naturally productive if given opportunity	G. theory X: workers considered unreliable so must be "engineered"

4. What are the similarities in the governance of a school district when using the management team concept and when using the traditional management concept?

Similarities between team management and traditional management in school districts:

A. Still have "positions"--i.e., superintendents, principals, teachers, etc.

B. Superintendents can still be caught between schools and school board.

C. There is still the need to get things done; have decisions made.

D. Smaller administrative decisions can be quickly made by the superintendent without consultation with others in both the team and traditional styles of management.

5. Is the management team in a school district normally a single and permanent part of the school governance program?

This question can't be answered accurately without statistics from many school districts. Since team management is a relatively new concept, no "ideal structures" for a management team have been found that fit all school districts. The arrangement of a management team is highly dependent on the nature of the local school district itself. Hopefully, each team fits the needs of the particular district and is open to appointing task forces which will work on specific or temporary problems.

Robert Townsend in Up the Organization says that organizational charts bring about rigor mortis. They have uses--for annual salary review, for educating investors on how the organization works and who does what. But draw them in pencil. Never formalize, print and circulate them. Good organizations are living bodies that form new muscles to meet challenges. A chart demoralizes people. Nobody thinks of himself as below other people. And in a good enterprise he isn't. In the best organization people see themselves working in a circle as if around one table. In this circular "structure," leadership may pass from one to another, depending on the particular task being attacked--without participants experiencing any "hang-ups."

6. Should a school district have a number of management teams, each established to handle specific and/or temporary goverance problems in a district?

Again, this question can't be fully answered without considering the school district in question. It is possible, however, that a number of management teams without a central, overall team could breed abundant team interest in the specific problems each team handles, without that team's consideration for the school district as a whole--its goals, objectives, policy.

7. Should a school district have a combination of both a single and overall management team plus ad hoc management teams or task forces to handle specific and more temporary challenges?

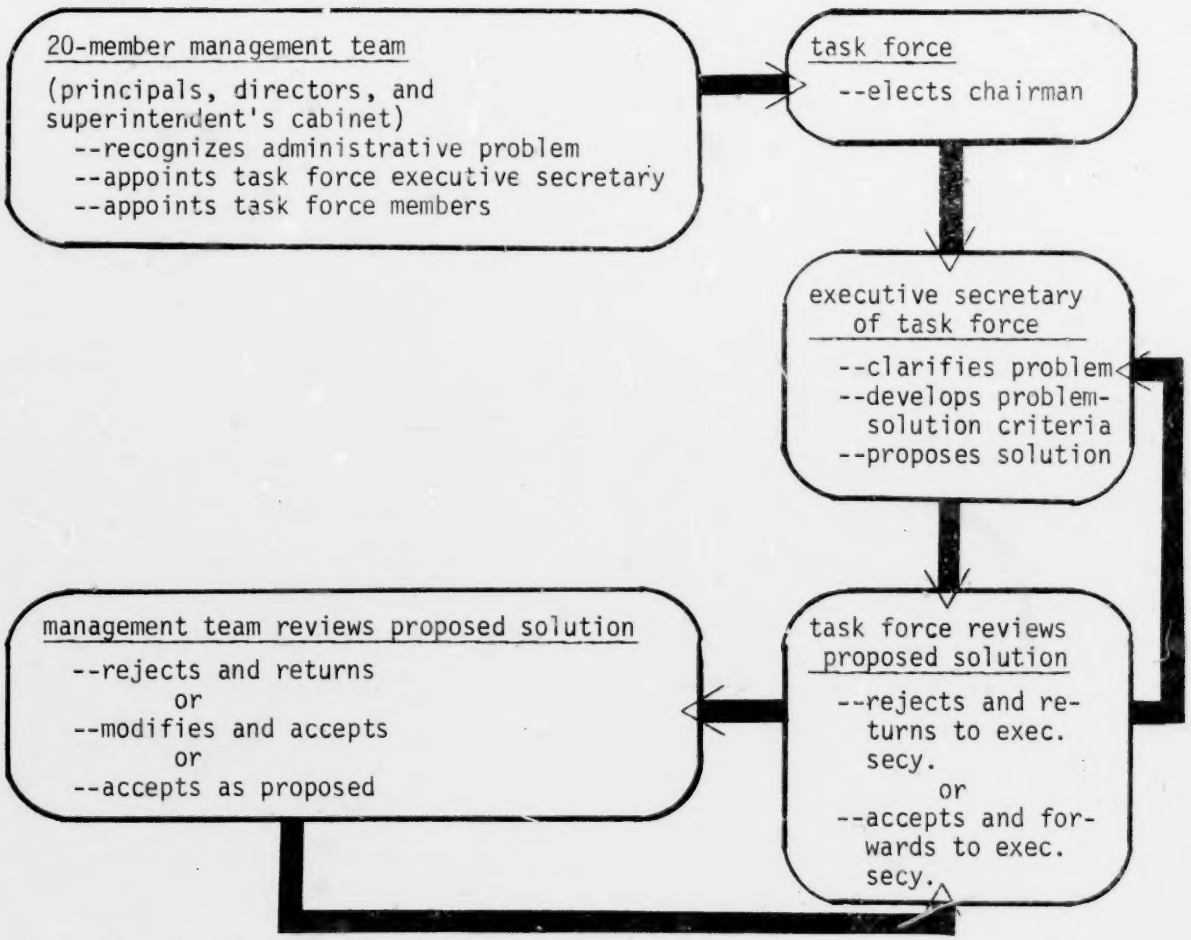
A school district utilizing team management should be flexible enough to have both an overall management team plus ad hoc management teams and task forces--as appropriate for the district and problem(s) at hand.

In San Leandro, California, the district utilizes a "listening, approval, disapproval, delegating kind of team" composed of just over twenty members--the superintendent and his cabinet, directors, and principals. When a major problem is presented before this team, an executive secretary for the new task is appointed. The executive secretary is the one the team sees as most qualified to find a solution to the problem if one person were to solve the problem by himself.

The San Leandro management team then appoints qualified members to be on a task force under the executive secretary. Then the task force elects a "task force chairman" who is responsible for the executive secretary's calling meetings and conducting appropriate business. (The task force chairman serves somewhat as a task force "check" on the executive secretary.)

The executive secretary is the specialist who, on assignment from the central management team, defines the problem, develops problem-solution criteria, and proposes a solution. He then meets with the task force (consisting of members working in the area of the problem, e.g., if the problem deals with the cafeteria, then cafeteria workers are on the task force). The task force members listen to the executive secretary's proposed solution, and accept or reject it. If they reject it, the problem is reworked by the executive secretary in light of the task force members' input. If the task force accepts the second solution, it is then forwarded to the management team for consideration. The team decides whether or not it can administer the solution presented.

The San Leandro Model



8. Who should be on the central management team in a large school district?

This again depends on the district--its kind of populace, schools, the superintendent, etc. If San Leandro is considered an example--it has over twenty members consisting of principals, directors, and the superintendent's cabinet. It is felt that this is not too large a team since it is basically a "listening, approval, disapproval, and delegating kind of team."

9. Who should be on the central management team in a small school district?

In a small district there is more of an opportunity to include representatives from all local schools--principals and possibly teacher representatives as well as classified employees on task forces appointed for the solving of specific problems.

Whether a school district is large or small, the management team and task force model does not constitute a limiting or static hierarchy. While still utilizing traditional positions it offers a dynamic and flexible management team concept with a maximum of open communication and involvement through representatives of those who will be affected by new decisions.

10. What alternatives are open to the superintendent who is held responsible by the school board, and who disagrees with the recommendation of his management team on a matter to be brought before the board?

A superintendent who is held responsible for decisions by the school board, and who disagrees with his management team can . . .

A. . . . have a veto power.

B. . . . submit his own recommendation alongside that of the management team. The board, then, has the responsibility of weighing the pros and cons of each position and then choosing the best solution. (The board may not like being in this kind of a position and may still feel the superintendent's job is to suggest the suitable solution regardless of the team's recommendation. In this case, the superintendent should seek to find a "right" solution which coincides as closely as possible with both his and the team's recommendations.)

C. Superintendent can submit to the team recommendation.

D. . . . can suggest further search for consensus solution.

E. . . . can ignore the management team recommendation and give his own. This, however, deviates from the whole "democratic" idea of team management; it should be very carefully weighed before enacted.

F. . . . can appoint an outside task force to work further on the problem.

G. . . . can hire a management consultant to aid in team-superintendent communications, and offer any other assistance related to the problem.

11. How might dilemmas arising from the above situation be best handled?

There is an old, perhaps trite saying, "Where there's a will, there's a way . . . " which still holds true. If a solution has not been found that pleases all decision makers involved, it is suggested that greater "will" be used by the superintendent--that he motivate team members to work together with him to find one solution all agree on, before submitting any recommendation to the board. Everything should be done to find a consensus of opinion. The school board still looks to the superintendent for one "best" solution--even though a management team is utilized.

12. Whom does the school board hold responsible for a decision that has been made by a management team?

As just mentioned, the school board looks to the superintendent for the final, "right" solution to a specific problem. And, even though a management team may have been instrumental in making this decision, the superintendent must be held responsible--just as traditionally he was held responsible when he made decisions entirely on his own. It is essential, then, that a superintendent be able to work with people (team members) effectively and

harmoniously. He must be a "democratic boss," a "humane manager" who inspires, and brings out good ideas in his team members.

13. What is meant by "middle management" in the traditional education management system?

"Middle management" in the traditional education management system refers to school principals and their influence on the overall management of a school district. The school principal, by being responsible for his particular school, continually surfaces current and overall needs of the district. In this way he indirectly helps manage a school district. He is held responsible for meeting the needs of his building, which in turn must meet the goals and objectives of the district as a whole. If there is a conflict within the principal between his own local school needs and district policy, he is "wedged in" between his school and the district, and must either drop some new idea for his school, or take appropriate action to alter district policy.

14. Is there actually a middle management category when working under the concept of management teams?

To continue with the principal who is "wedged in" between local school and district policy, his "appropriate action" to alter district policy might be difficult under the traditional management system. However, under a team management system, his ideas will more likely be heard. The category of "middle management" tends to disappear under the team management concept since principals are usually represented on the central management team.

15. What has prompted the current interest in team management from superintendents; from principals; from school boards?

Superintendents' interest in the management team has been prompted by pressures they experience from the board, teachers, and today's complex school problems, Since the advent of teachers organizing--e.g., teacher strikes, militant groups--and taxpayers speaking out on issues, the superintendent has found himself without the power he once had. Through team management he may be able to gain back some of this power--since all involved groups are represented, and he as superintendent is still the board's executive officer responsible for the schools.

Principals' interest in team management is prompted by feelings of "being in the middle" and not being heard. Through team management, the principal has more opportunity to contribute.

School boards' interest in team management is prompted by collective bargaining processes which do not often involve principals as a part of the management negotiating team. School board members are definite in wanting principals to be their management representatives in the district. For the sake of consistency and fairness, board members must also include principal representatives on the collective bargaining teams where future principal-teacher working relationships are being developed.

16. What, if any, has been the impact of collective bargaining and negotiations on the development or demise of the management team concept?

Collective bargaining and negotiations has bred "support from own kind"--e.g., teachers are supported by more teachers in getting what they want from a district. Teachers, principals, other

administrators and school employees are creating their respective groups in order to be heard. Hence, it becomes almost mandatory that each of these groups be represented in some way in the school management enterprise; the management team seems to be the answer.

17. What is behind the current growing interest in the team management concept?

"Democracy"--"humaneness," and the search for stronger, more workable solutions--are two prevailing factors behind the current interest in team management. Also, in our quickly changing society, the need for updated and relevant ideas is apparent. With a management team, more ideas are available for consideration and more new ideas are normally accepted than with traditional-style management--because there is a more open attitude on the part of all involved.

18. On overall balance, what are the advantages and disadvantages of the management team concept?

Advantages of the management team:

The quality of decisions is usually better when several people share in the decision making. In this way, a solution is "sifted," and continually improved by the group--challenged and tested for its strength and utility.

With team management, those affected by certain decisions may be a part of the decision making. There is more humaneness in this process than if management simply tells what should be done. Overall, employee morale is high because of their meaningful involvement in the enterprise.

Disadvantages of team management:

The team management process of decision making takes more time than the traditional approach.

If this can be considered a "disadvantage"--team management requires a sincere effort on the part of the manager

not to be the man with all the answers. To be a democratic leader--necessary for team management--must be a heartfelt attitude rather than a "going through the motions."

19. Is it possible to institute the management team concept in units of a school district (such as local schools) as well as for the entire district?

The management team concept should be adopted by other units of the school district--e.g., by principals of their schools and teachers in a specific school--especially if the district itself uses a management team. In this way, all units of a district are consistent in management processes. As with the superintendent and his management team, decisions made by principals and their teams, teachers and their teams, must be kept within district policy.

20. If a superintendent sees the idea of management teams as desirable for implementation throughout the district, how can that system of governance best be "sold" to principals and other unit leaders?

Team management can be "sold" to principals and other unit leaders by making them aware that 1) decisions made through group endeavor usually come out better than by individual effort, and 2) if they are included in decision-making processes which affect them, they may be encouraged to include their subordinates in more local school decisions which affect the teachers.

The #1 Man--District or School

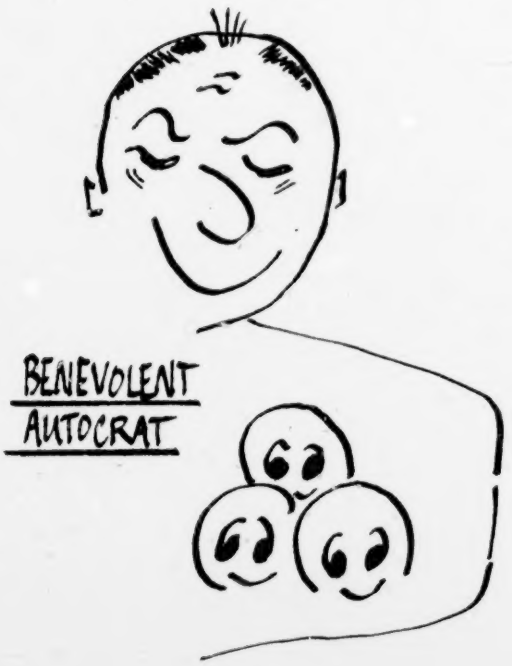
Question: What kind of leadership fosters the failure of management teams? What kind fosters their success?

The success or failure of a management team is not only fostered by the kind of leader an enterprise has, but success or failure actually depends on the #1 man. Five general kinds of leaders are considered below:

1. Lovable type
2. Hard-boiled autocrat
3. Benevolent autocrat (paternalistic)
4. Non-interferer
5. Democratic boss

The lovable leader is afraid of hurting someone's feelings so that he has trouble making some decisions. He's nice, warm, and accepting. As he runs a management team, team members tend to take advantage of his niceness. A stronger member of the team may tend to take over and run things his way, and the lovable leader normally would take no issue with him.

The hard-boiled autocrat is the "tough guy" who feels no one can do the job as well as he can. He's constantly looking over shoulders and doubtful of anyone else's ability. He fails to praise his employees and he uses his subordinates simply as a means to his own advancement. People on a management team under this kind of boss usually are intimidated and, out of fear, try to do what he wants. They may try to find out how he feels about a problem before they commit themselves in any way. Obviously, a true management team could not function under this kind of leader, since there is no open, free-flowing, and honest communication.



The benevolent autocrat is the fatherly type who trades benevolence for loyalty. "I'll take care of you if you'll do what I say, but don't cross me, or else . . . " Like the hard-boiled autocrat, he can't delegate work. He sets himself up as the source of nearly all ideas and solutions--although he's nicer about it than the hard-boiled autocrat. Psychologists say that many people would rather work for this type of boss than any other type, since they feel secure--as children with their father. However, as all these "children" are trying to get on the good side of their "father" boss, they tend not to get along with one another, and the team management concept falls apart. As with the hard-boiled autocrat, employees don't feel the freedom necessary to express their own opinions openly and honestly.

The non-interferer is the "laissez faire" type of leader who didn't choose to be a leader in the first place. He really doesn't like to come in contact with people, tends to be uncomfortable around them, and therefore does what he can to avoid contacts with them. In an organization, he'll fill most of his working hours with paper work--reports and the like which may not be too important. He doesn't set goals for his subordinates and he communicates with them very poorly. The management team likely would collapse into apathy as a result of this "care-less" and non-interfering kind of boss.

The management team needs democratic leadership. Employees know where they stand with him, and they are given the opportunity to grow. The democratic boss criticizes, but he does it very constructively. He's quick to compliment specific work when some task has been done well. He sees that employees are properly trained in order to get ahead. He doesn't feel threatened by talent around him, and he delights in the successes of others. He knows how to delegate tasks to appropriate persons. Communication lines are open and he is not "unapproachable." He seeks to understand what employees really feel, and expresses his true feelings about a specific problem or situation. In sum, he cares about all those around him, hence is "democratic"--a "humane manager" who is decisive, strong, yet flexible and considerate as the situation calls for.

The democratic leader is not the "perfect person" or "perfect manager." He'll have his bad days, his moods which won't seem so democratic or humane. However, for the most part, his attitude is one of caring. Interestingly, this kind of boss, at some times, may necessarily become a little bit of an autocrat to get something done that's at stake; or he may lean toward other types temporarily as it seems appropriate. But, underlying it all, this #1 man is still fundamentally a "democratic boss," whose management team gladly works with him.

Conclusion

The management team in educational administration--is it ideal? Practical? Both? Team management is "ideal" to the extent that it operates democratically. It is "practical" in that it normally finds a more sound solution than if one person, alone, came up with a solution. The management team concept as a practical venture is not without its challenges, as it requires a dedicated democratic boss (a humane manager) as well as more time and effort than the traditional way of managing. Yet, if it means greater success and more satisfied employees, it is worth this special dedication and hard work.

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